

Whereas, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was founded on four principles: inclusion, full participation, economic self-sufficiency, and equality of opportunity for all people with disabilities; and

Whereas, the United States Census Bureau reported in 2000 that there were 1,117,577 people with disabilities in the State of North Carolina out of a total population of 8,046,485; and

Whereas, most families are likely to become affected by someone with some kind of disability; and

Whereas, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that during the 2003-2004 school year, North Carolina served 193,956 students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and

Whereas, research has shown that students with disabilities encounter more difficulty fitting in with their peers, making friends, and becoming involved in school and community-based activities and clubs than their nondisabled peers; and

Whereas, in order to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities into society, it is necessary to expand the public's knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the history of disabilities and the disability rights movement; and

Whereas, October is recognized nationally as Disability Employment Awareness Month; and

Whereas, designating Disability History and Awareness Month in North Carolina will increase public awareness and respect for people with disabilities who comprise a substantial percentage of North Carolina's population, teach future generations that people with disabilities have a rich history and have made valuable contributions throughout North Carolina and the United States, and ensure future generations understand that disability is a natural part of life and that people with disabilities have a right to be treated as individuals above all else; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 103 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 103-11. Disability History and Awareness Month.

The month of October of each year is designated as Disability History and Awareness Month in North Carolina."

SECTION 2. G.S. 115C-81 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

"(j) Disability History and Awareness. – Each local board of education shall provide instruction on disability, people with disabilities, and the disability rights movement in conjunction with Disability History and Awareness Month, established pursuant to G.S. 103-11. This instruction shall be incorporated into the standard curriculum through measures that include: (i) supplementing existing lesson plans, (ii) holding school assemblies, (iii) hosting disability-focused film festivals, or (iv) organizing other school activities. Local boards of education are encouraged to incorporate individuals with disabilities or knowledgeable guest speakers from the disability community into the delivery of this instruction."

SECTION 3. The constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina are encouraged to conduct and promote activities that provide education, awareness, and understanding of disability history, people with disabilities, and the disability rights movement.

SECTION 4. Nothing in this act shall require the General Assembly to appropriate funds to implement it or require a local school administrative unit to spend